

AN <sup>2</sup>  
EPISTLE  
OF  
Tender Love  
To ALL the  
Flock of God  
EVERY WHERE

Containing an *Exhortation to Faithfulness to God and Love to all Men.* under all Sufferings and Afflictions we meet with for the Exercise of our Consciences towards God.

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By one that Travails in Soul and Spirit for Sions Peace and Prosperity William Bingley. *Quaker*

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*Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer &c. Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*  
Rev. 2. 10

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London, Printed and Sold by Andrew Sowle, in Holloway-lane in Shoreditch, 1683.



# An Epistle of Tender Love To the Flock of God every where.

*Dear Friends and Brethren;*

**W**HOM God in his infinite Love hath called out of the World, and out of the Ways, Worships and Pollutions that are in it, unto this high and heavenly Calling, even to be Partakers together of the New Covenant, and by a living sense and experience of the blessed effect of the blood of the said Covenant, to become his Sons and Daughters, and to be Enjoyers together of the blessed Fellowship of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Unity of his blessed Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and to have a Habitation in his Kingdom of eternal Glory, which is an everlasting Kingdom and Dominion, of the Increase, Joy and Peace thereof shall be no end.

And seeing it hath pleased Almighty God thus to reach unto us with the Visitations of his divine Love, who in times past were wandering at a great distance from him, being Strangers and Aliens in our Minds, from the Covenant of Grace, I say, to visit us, and to cause his Light to shine in our hearts, and to make known the Riches of his Love in our Souls, in bringing us into Covenant with himself; Oh! that we all may be found faithful in answering the end of the great Love of our God (in calling us by his Grace, and shedding his heavenly Love abroad in our hearts) in walking worthy of this high and holy Calling, whereunto he hath called us, as becometh his Sons and Daughters, yielding all Subjection and Obedience unto him that hath called us; that he by his divine Power (which wrought in the primitive Christians mightily) may work in us, to the working out of all that which is contrary to his blessed Will, and more and more to leaven us into his own sweet and heavenly Nature, and that we may thereby grow up in all manner of Holiness in our Lives and Conversations, to the Praise and Glory of the Name of the Lord, and the mutual Joy and Comfort one of another.

And

And being found faithful unto him that hath called (as the Apostle said) unto Glory and Virtue, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these we might be Partakers of the divine Nature, having escaped the Corruptions or Pollutions that are in the World through Lust, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

And thus having faithfully followed the Lord, and freely given up to the workings of the Spirit of Truth, that worketh in us, in order to cleanse and to sanctifie our hearts and inward parts, we shall not only be the called of God, but also become chosen Vessels in the House of our God, truly fitted & made meet for the Lords use at his will and pleasure, and also to receive at his holy Hand what we stand in need of, and to be filled with his divine Treasures of Wisdom and Life, which he is sweetly shedding abroad in the Hearts and Souls of his faithful Sons and Daughters, to their great Comfort and Refreshment.

And now, blessed are all those that have thus in sincerity of heart given up to answer the great Love of God to them, in calling them out of the World (and out of all those fading Delights and Pleasures that are in it, which wither like the Grass and Flowers of the Field) up into a heavenly sweetness with himself, to mind and take pleasure in those things which are of a lasting and enduring Nature, and have truly known the Lord by his Spirit of Judgment and Burning, to empty them of all the Dross, Tin and Rubbish, which the Enemy of mans Soul hath filled them withal, and to fill them with his heavenly Treasures of Life, and every day to have a dependency on the Lord, who out of the Riches of his Bounty filleth all things, to receive from him, day by day the fresh springing in of this divine Stream of Life, or heavenly Treasure, into our earthen Vessels, that thereby we may be preserved in a living freshness and sweetness of Spirit before the Lord unto the end of our days.

For it is by a daily enjoyment of this Stream of Life, that flows from the Fountain which God Almighty hath opened (and invites all that are *a thirsty* to come and partake thereof freely, without Money and without Price) by which we are enabled to run the Race with patience, which is set before us, without fainting, notwithstanding the many Assaults, Buffetings, Temptations and Tribulations we meet withal in our Journey towards that Habitation

tion and Rest in that City that hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God, which is the same the holy Men of God sought after in antient days.

And as we are preserved in a living sense of the sweet openings of the divine Spirit of Life, and the surroundings of the Arm and Power of the living God, we shall be made capable and enabled thereby to worship the Lord our God in Spirit and Truth, according to his holy Requirings, and to stand faithful and valiant in our Testimony for the true Worship of the living God, and against all false Worships that are in the World, and to glorifie the Lord with our Bodies, Souls and Spirits, which are his, in our Day and Generation; and by the same Power are we-enabled to fulfill the Commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ, viz. *To love one another, and so provoke one another to Love and good Works, serving one another in Brotherly Love, and to make Supplication to the Lord for all men (for those in Authority) that we may lead a godly and peaceable Life under them, because the Lord would have none to perish in their sins, but that all might come to the knowledge of the Truth, and be saved.*

And seeing the Lord in his infinite Kindness hath raised us up (who were dead in Trespasses and Sins) to bear witness and testimony to his Truth and Love, which is universal to all Mankind, Oh! that we may be found faithful therein, and that all our Lives and Conversations may be so seasoned and sanctified by the Word of Truth, which is nigh to all (even in their Hearts and in their Mouthes) as that we may be good Examples, both in Words and Actions, to all men with whom we have to do, and that our Lights may so shine before men, that they may see our good Works, and glorifie our Father which is in Heaven, and we thereby become Instrumental in the hand of the Lord, for the gathering in of those that are yet scattered upon the dark Mountains of mens Imaginations, where there is no Food to their immortal Souls, into the enjoyment of his blessed Presence, in whose Presence there is Life, and at his right Hand Pleasures for evermore, and for the spreading of the Fame and Glory of the Name and Truth of our God, from one end of the Earth to the other.

And now dear Friends, though it be our lot (for thus following  
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the Lord that hath called us, and loving, serving and worshipping him in Spirit and in Truth, which is our indispensable Duty (and all Mankind so to do) in our Day and Generation, according to the requirings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for seeking the Everlasting Peace and Happiness of all the Children of men) to meet with Sufferings and Exercises, viz. *Scourgings, Imprisonments, Loss of Goods and cruel Usage*, even from those that our cries are to the Lord for, that they might come to the knowledge of the Truth, and be saved. Well! let none be dismay'd nor discouraged at these *Sufferings* and *Afflictions* we meet with and undergo from those that are mistaken in us, and know not our Sincerity and Integrity to God, and good Will to all men; for it was the Path of our Lord and Master Christ Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation (who was made perfect through Sufferings) trod before us, and all his faithful Followers in every Age have met with in some degree; so that it doth not come upon us at unawares, for Christ hath signified to his faithful Followers, what they should meet withal in the World. We may call to mind what our Lord and Saviour said to his Disciples, by way of encouraging them in their Sufferings and Persecutions he foresaw would come upon them for his Name's sake; *If the World hate you (as he knew it would) ye know it hated me before it hated you; if ye were of the World, the World would love its own, but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you. Remember, saith our Lord, the words that I said unto you, The Servant is not greater than his Lord; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; &c. and all these things will they do unto you for my Name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.* John 15. 18, 19, 20.

And again, he said to his Disciples and faithful Followers, *They shall deliver you up to the Councils, and they will scourge you in their Synagogues, and ye shall be brought before Governors and Kings, and ye shall be hated of all Nations for my Name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved,* Mat. 10. 17, 18, 22.

And the Apostle Paul had his share in these *Sufferings* and *Afflictions*, who was an eminent Labourer in the Work and Gospel of Christ, for the good of all Mankind, and yet for his Labouring in this good Work, met with Persecutions and Afflictions, and



and also signifies, *It was not only his Lot in that Age, but would be also the Lot and Portion of all those that came to be redeemed out of the World, and to follow the Lamb in the Regeneration, and to live a holy and godly Life in Christ Jesus, all such must suffer Persecution,* 2 Tim. 3. 12. But though the Lord do suffer or permit these Sufferings to come upon his People, yet he does not forsake them nor hide his face from them in the time of Trouble, but as he promised to Israel of Old, *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy Name, and thou art mine: When thou passest through the Water I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the Fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the Flames kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the holy One of Israel, thy Saviour,* Isa. 43. 1, 2, 3. So blessed be the Lord, we have known this Promise made good to us in a spiritual Sense in this our Day and Generation, so that all the Floods that have risen up against us, have not drowned nor overwhelmed us, but through the goodness of the Lord, that hath born up our heads through these Water-floods, we are yet alive to praise the Name of our God in the Land of the Living; for though our Enemies are and may be permitted to rise up like a Flood against us, yet the Spirit of the Lord (as the Prophet said) hath and will lift up a Standard for us, and he will plead our innocent Cause; for its known to God (to whom we appeal for help) that we are an innocent peaceable People, designing harm to no man, but seeking the good of all, yea, of our very Enemies. I say, this God that judgeth righteously will plead our Innocency——(in the Hearts of our Adversaries) to whom alone we commit our innocent Cause: And this we do certainly know, though the Lord do suffer these things to come upon us for the trial of our Faith and Constancy in Tribulation, yet as Christ our Lord said, *Not one Hair of your Head shall perish or fall to the ground, without your heavenly Father.* And we do believe these our Sufferings (as we continue in patience under them) will have the same effect in some degree, as Job's had on him, who said on this wise, *But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as Gold,* Job 23. 10.

And if God take care (as Christ signified) to feed the Fowls of the Air, and to clothe the Lillies, that neither toil nor spin,  
will

will he not much more take care for his faithful Children and People, who have given up their *All*, even their Lives and Liberties, and all they enjoy in this World, are not near or dear unto them, in comparison of the Name and Truth of the living God; yea, the Lord ever did and will take care of all those that suffer for Righteousness sake, and will be their Rock and their Shield; And his Name hath been, and will be forever a strong Tower for the Righteous to flee to in all Storms and Tempests, in which there is safety and preservation for all that put their trust and confidence in the Lord; for he ever had a regard to his afflicted People in all Ages; neither did he leave them in their Afflictions, but was with them, and stood by them, as the Prophet saith, *In all their Afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence that saved them, Isa. 36. 9.* The Lord is the same this day to his People; and by his good Presence and divine Power doth sanctifie all these Afflictions to us, and make them easie, though no Affliction for the present seemeth joyous, yet being preserved faithful under them, they work a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.

And in a living sence of the goodness of the Lord, that is plentifully enjoyed in the midst of all these Afflictions, we can say, as the Apostle said of old, *Though we be afflicted, yet not forsaken; and though in Distress, yet not cast down;* for the Lord is the Lifter up of our Heads, and the Comforter of our Souls in the day of Distress, and a sure Refuge for his afflicted Ones; yea, a Remnant can say in Truth and Righteousness, (blessed be his Name forever) *He is our Life and our Joy, our Portion, and the Lot of our Inheritance, and from him alone all our fresh Springs and Comforts come;* who is become in this day, unto his People that hunger and thirst after his Righteousness, as an open Fountain, and as a place of broad Rivers and Streams, where the thirsting and travelling Souls drink, and are refreshed, their Strength in him renewed, and their Minds and Spirits born up over all the Afflictions they meet with in this troublesome World.

And now, dear Friends, wait upon the Lord, that you may feel his Presence with you, and his Arm of divine Power to surround you, to comfort in these Tribulations we meet with; for you know, that through many Tribulations the Kingdom is entered, that



that no one may grow weary, nor faint in their Minds, but by waiting in diligence upon the living God, may know his Promise to be fulfilled to you, which is; *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their Strength, and shall mount up as on the Wings of an Eagle; and shall walk and not be weary, and Run and not faint.* And as our feet have been turned into the way of Peace, and our faces set *Sion*-wards, let us go on in the Name and Strength of our God; for it is those that continue in faithfulness to the End that shall enter into the *Joy of the Lord*, which Joy all the Strength and Rage of Man shall never be able to deprive us of; and if we so run this Race which we are called into, as that we obtain the Price and Mark set before us, the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, and inherit the Kingdom of Everlasting Glory, where all Tears shall be wip't away from our Eyes; this will make up all our Losses, yea, the Comfort and Sweetness of it will superabound all the Exercises and Afflictions we have undergone in this World; for all the Riches and Glory this World can afford is not to be compared with the Earnest of this purchased Possession, which is already enjoyed by the Faithful, much less to be compared with the Fullness of this Inheritance, that shall never fade away.

O Dear Friends and Brethren! who Suffer for Righteousness sake, and for the Testimony of a good Conscience towards God and all men (for as such we suffer, and not as Evil-doers) my Soul and Spirit is opened in Brotherly love towards you, and as a Member of that Living Body (of which Christ our Lord is the Head, into which Oneness and Membership the Lord in his great kindness hath brought and united us together) do I truly sympathize with you in your Sufferings, and my earnest Cryes and Supplications are to the Lord, *That we all may be preserved faithful to him through all these things unto the End.* Let our Eye be to the Lord who made way for his People in Ancient days, and wrought Deliverance for them by his out stretched Arm, when they were beset on every hand, and saw no way how to escape, the Red-Sea being before them, and the Host of *Pharaoh* behind pursuing them, with a design to destroy them, even in that streight the Counsel of the Lord was to them, *Stand still, and behold the Salvation of God;* and the Lord is the same this day to his People;

who will not suffer us to be tempted or tryed beyond what we are made able to bear, but will with the Tryals and Temptations give Strength and Patience to undergo them chearfully, we knowing that the Lord, when it pleaseth him, can and will deliver out of them all.

And Dear Friends, let us all wait upon the Lord to receive Wisdom and Counsel from him (who is made of God unto us *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*, for our God in his great Bounty giveth Wisdom to them that (in a true sense of a need thereof) asketh it of him, who is the *wonderful Counsellor, the Prince of Peace, the everlasting Father*) that when-ever we are brought before Magistrates and Rulers for Christ's sake, we may behave our selves in *Innocency, Meekness and Gravity*, (yet standing immoveable in our Testimony for the Lord and his Truth) which the Wisdom that is from above leads into, as that we may reach the Witness of God in them, and in all People with whom we have to do.

And Friends, watch against that Spirit that would render *Evil for Evil, and Reviling for Reviling*, and would seek *Revenge* against them that persecute us because we cannot answer their Wills and Commands, which if we should answer, we should defile our own Consciences, and break our Peace with God, which a Remnant prizeth more than either *Life or Liberty*; but let us do good to all, yea, to those that *despightfully* use us, and pray for them that persecute and hate us without a cause, that the Lord may open their Understandings, and let them see what they are doing, that they may find a place of Repentance, and may mind the things that belong to their Peace, before they are hid from their Eyes: And we heartily desire that the Lord may forgive them all the Evil which they have done to us; and hereby we shew forth *Christianity* in its own Nature, which teacheth to *Love one another, and Enemies also*, and to *live a holy and godly Life in this present evil World*, and so to answer what the Lord hath shewn unto man (as the Prophet saith) *what is good, and what the Lord requires of him, That he do Justly, love Mercy, and walk Humbly with his God*, Mic. 6. 8.

And as we are thus found walking in Humility with the Lord, he will open his Hand, and fill with his Blessings the Souls of all those that stand open-hearted before him, and will be our Teacher

Teacher and Instructor in all things; for he will teach *the* *Plumbe* of his *Wayes*, and the *Mole*, he will guide in Judgment; and he will cause (as he hath done many a time to his People that wait on him, for which we bless his holy Name) the Showers of his Love to fall on them, and the warming Beams of the Sun of Righteousness to shine into their Hearts, and thereby to grow up before the Lord, as Plants of his own Right hand planting, and as Trees of Righteousness, that take Rooting by the Rivers of Water, whose Leaves fade not, and whose Fruits shall never fail. And that thus we may grow up to the Lord in that which is well-pleasing in his sight, and may bring forth Fruits of Righteousness, to his Praise and Glory, and our Comfort for evermore, are the earnest Desires of my Soul to the Lord for my self, and for all the Heritage of the Lord every where.

Written in London  
the 19th of the 9th  
Moneth, 1683.

William Bingley.

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THE END.

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